

## **NOAA Federal Program Officer (FPO) Checklist Instructions for New Awards**

NOTE: The NOAA FPO Checklist is an MS Word document (may also be formatted in Word Perfect) that should be filled out electronically in MS Word, be saved on a local disk/drive (to be emailed as indicated in the instructions below), and printed out (and signed) for submission with the application package to the Grants Office.

INSTRUCTIONS for filling out the Checklist form using MS Word checkbox ☒ and text fields :

- ❖ Double click on checkbox and under "Default value" select "Checked" and then click "OK".
- ❖ For text fields, simply [single] click on the underlined shaded field and start typing text.

Additional information regarding DOC policy, which serves as the basis for the requirements of the NOAA FPO Checklist, can be found in the DOC Grants and Cooperative Agreements Interim Manual dated February 2002 (herein referred to as the "DOC Manual") and can be accessed online at: [http://www.osc.doc.gov/oebam/pdf/CGA\\_manual.pdf](http://www.osc.doc.gov/oebam/pdf/CGA_manual.pdf)

The DOC Manual encourages the use of checklists to streamline and standardize the grant review process. Thus, completion of the NOAA FPO Checklist (herein referred to as the "Checklist") as well as all required reviews and additional documentation are mandatory for all NOAA Line Offices/Program Offices that recommend an application for funding as a grant or cooperative agreement. Because this is a standardized format intended to cover a wide-variety of programs, new or unusual programs may require additional documentation not addressed by this Checklist and/or instructions, on a case-by-case basis. In addition, these instructions may be updated throughout the fiscal year if needed to clarify requirements of the Checklist.

### Definitions and Contact Information:

"APPLICATION PACKAGE" refers to the collective set of documents required from both the applicant and the FPO which must be submitted to the Grants Office in order to make a financial assistance award (i.e., to issue a grant or cooperative agreement). A list of all of the documentation requirements for a complete Application Package and the order in which the documentation should be assembled for submission to the Grants Office is provided at the end of the Checklist.

The term "AWARD" is used interchangeably to refer to a "grant" or a "cooperative agreement".

Grants Office Team Leaders are assigned to Line/Program Offices as indicated below and can provide individual assistance as needed. In addition, the Grants Policy Advisor serves as the main contact for NOAA grant policy issues and designation of institutional awards.

NOS and NMFS – [Lamar.Revis@noaa.gov](mailto:Lamar.Revis@noaa.gov)

OAR, NWS, NESDIS, and other NOAA programs (excluding NOS or NMFS) – [Lori.C.Wiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Lori.C.Wiley@noaa.gov)

Grants Policy Advisor – [Steve.J.Drescher@noaa.gov](mailto:Steve.J.Drescher@noaa.gov)

"FALD" refers to the DOC Federal Assistance Law Division which is also commonly referred to as "OGC" which is an acronym for the Office of General Counsel. FALD may provide legal advice and assistance to Line/Program Offices as needed. FALD staff assignments and contact information can be found at: <http://www.ogc.doc.gov/ogc/fl/fedasst.html>

### 1. GENERAL AWARD INFORMATION

#### **NEW NOAA AWARD NUMBER**

New award numbers must be obtained from the Grants Office (except for NMFS) prior to submission of the application package to the Grants Office in order to properly identify and

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track the application package. Continuing awards (that do NOT exceed 5 years) do not require a new award number and should be submitted with the Checklist for Amendments.

To request an award number, send an email to [Joan.Gibson@noaa.gov](mailto:Joan.Gibson@noaa.gov) with the email subject line of "New Award Number" and provide the following information in the text of the email:

- ✓ Applicant Organization name,
- ✓ State,
- ✓ Federal \$ being awarded,
- ✓ CFDA number, and
- ✓ NOAA Line Office of the Federal Program Officer for the award.

Note: If a response to an award number request is not received after 2 business days, then forward the actual email that was sent to Joan Gibson to the Grants Team Leader assigned to the FPO's Line Office as indicated above under Contact Information.

### **APPLICANT ORGANIZATION / STATE**

This information, which can be found on the application (SF-424), is needed on the Checklist for reference and tracking purposes.

### **DATE ORIGINAL APPLICATION RECEIVED BY NOAA**

This is the date that the original application was received by the NOAA Program Office. In the case of competitive programs, the original application would refer to the date the proposal was received as required by the solicitation deadline.

### **GRANT**

The legal instrument reflecting a relationship between DOC/NOAA and a recipient whenever (1) the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer money, property, services, or anything of value in order to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute; and (2) no substantial involvement is anticipated between DOC/NOAA and the recipient during the performance of the contemplated activity.

### **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT \***

The legal instrument reflecting a relationship between DOC/NOAA and a recipient whenever (1) the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer money, property, services, or anything of value in order to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute; and (2) substantial involvement (e.g., collaboration, participation, or intervention by DOC/NOAA in the management of the project) is anticipated between DOC/NOAA and the recipient during performance of the contemplated activity.

A statement of the substantial involvement of NOAA Program Office in the performance of the proposed activity must be detailed in a Programmatic Special Award Condition (SAC) and incorporated into the award made to the recipient. Substantial involvement is a condition of the award because it outlines the specific actions or activities that will be taken by the NOAA Program Office during the award period. See Chapter 5 of the DOC Manual for examples of what constitutes substantial involvement and see the instructions below under section 14 for formatting/submission requirements of Programmatic Special Award Conditions.

### **CFDA NO / CFDA TITLE**

CFDA stands for Catalog for Federal Domestic Assistance which represents a listing of all federally funded (financial assistance) programs offered by each Federal agency. All Federal programs can be searched from the main CFDA website at [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov) and all of NOAA's

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financial assistance programs are listed on the following direct link:

[http://www.cfda.gov/public/browse\\_subagy.asp?agy\\_id=11.06&st=1](http://www.cfda.gov/public/browse_subagy.asp?agy_id=11.06&st=1)

The FPO is responsible for identifying the correct CFDA NO/TITLE for the applicant's proposed activity and should assist the applicant with filling this out in Block 10 of the SF-424 application, if necessary.

### STATUTORY AUTHORITY CITATION

This is grant-making authority for the proposed activity. The citation is typically a statute of the United States Code (USC), although for new programs the Public Law may be the only reference for the authority for the award to be made. The DOC Federal Assistance Law Division (FALD) should be contacted directly if assistance is needed. (see Contact Information on page 1)

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### 2. BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This should be a concise statement without any acronyms (unless defined) that provides a very brief summary of the proposed activity. The description should be no more than a few sentences so that it can be data entered into the NOAA Grant System and used by the Grants Office for congressional notification (through the Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs) at time of award.

The Office of Public Affairs also utilizes this project description for press releases of awards \$300,000 or greater, however, the FPO must provide notification to the Public Affairs Office at time of submission of the application package to the Grants Office. (see section 6 under Funding Info)

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### 3. BASIS OF SELECTION

Chapter 8 of the DOC Manual sets out the standards and procedures for the selection of financial assistance awards which has been summarized below. Each selection category requires specific documentation that must be submitted along with the Checklist and application package.

#### **Discretionary Funding** (see Chapter 6 of DOC Manual for definition)

##### **? Competitive**

Competitive Awards are made after proposals are reviewed and selected as the result of a program solicitation that has been published in the Federal Register. A selection recommendation package demonstrating that the review process was conducted in accordance with the Federal Register must be reviewed by the Federal Assistance Law Division (FALD) prior to submission to the Grants Office.

A copy of the complete selection recommendation package with documentation of review clearance by FALD shall be included with every competitive application package submitted to the Grants Office for funding. (see Chapter 8 subpart C. of the DOC Manual)

##### Selection Recommendation Package:

- ✓ A recommendation memo signed and dated by the Selection Official that includes:
  - Explanation of the selection criteria used to evaluate, score, and rank each of the applications received in accordance with the solicitation,

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- Summary of the results of the review including indication of the number of applications received, reviewed, and rejected,
  - Explanation of the basis for selecting any applications out of rank order,
  - Certification that all applications considered were received by the deadline established in the announcement (proof of deadline being met must be maintained in the NOAA Program files and be available upon request), and
  - Indication that all non-Federal reviewers have signed a DOC approved conflict of interest form (e.g., CD-571) and that is either maintained in NOAA Program files as a hard copy or received as a DOC approved electronic certification.
- ✓ List by rank order of all applications received along with the following information:
  - Clear identification of the applications by Institution, Principal Investigator, and/or Project Title,
  - Independent merit review scores (at least three) for each application plus an average score by which the applications should be ranked,
  - Clear identification of all applications selected for funding (with the individual proposed application highlighted in bold or colored ink.)
- ✓ Copy of the specific Federal Register notice and DOC approved Program Announcement that solicited the applications for competitive review.
- ✓ Copies of individual reviews should be maintained in the NOAA Program Office and be available upon request.

[Note: Copies of any review instructions, checklists, and/or other review documents provided to the independent reviewers for which the scores are utilized to rank the applications should be reviewed by FALD prior to use.]

The Federal Program Officer must ensure compliance with the application requirements outlined in the program announcement and any exceptions should be specifically addressed in the selection recommendation memo. Some common problem areas that should be considered are:

- Application closing date deadlines
- Identification or proof of the application being submitted on time (maintain in program file)
- Matching/Cost-share requirements
- Indirect cost limitations (must be based on a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement)
- Statutory authority to be identified on the Checklist (and on the award)
- Proper identification of the CFDA number and title on the application

### **? Non-Competitive**

Non-Competitive Awards made with discretionary funds can be approved only in unusual and extraordinary circumstances. In order for the NOAA Grants Office to be able to issue a non-competitive award, proper written justification and three (3) or more independent merit reviews must be provided by the Program Office along with the application package. The FPO must utilize the criteria outlined in the DOC Manual, Chapter 8, Section F, to justify non-competitive award based on one or more of the following factors:

- (1) Only One Source identified
- (2) Unusual and Compelling Urgency
- (3) International Agreement
- (4) National Security
- (5) Public Interest
- (6) Congressional Direction: This sixth basis for non-competitive selection is considered separately– see instructions for Congressionally Directed awards listed below.

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### **? Congressionally Directed (soft earmark)**

Only the NOAA CFO/Budget Officer (or designee) may invoke this exception for non-competitive "congressionally directed" awards. This may be accomplished through the issuance of one memorandum and budget/grants matrix to identify all "congressionally directed" projects after the current fiscal year appropriation has been passed by Congress. When submitting an application for a congressionally directed award, please submit a copy of the memo along with a copy of the specific page from the matrix with the subject project highlighted for easy identification by the Grants Office. The matrix must identify the name of the recipient organization or a revision to the matrix must be obtained by the Program Office from the NOAA Budget Office prior to submission to the Grants Office. If the amount of the award does not match the dollar amount identified on the matrix for the proposed project, then the Federal Program Officer must provide written explanation of the difference in funding levels and what is being done with the remaining funds. In addition, a soft earmark is required to undergo three (3) or more merit/technical reviews by subject matter experts.

### Merit Reviews

Merit-based reviews should be conducted in accordance with the review standards indicated in the DOC Manual Chapter 8, Section B. Subpart 4 of this section specifically addresses selection of reviewers. Should negative issues arise during the merit/technical review process, it will be the responsibility of the Program Office to resolve all issues to the satisfaction of the NOAA Grants Officer. If a recipient is unwilling to modify their application based on sound comments from the reviewers, the FPO must fully document what action was taken to solicit changes from the applicant and their response.

Generic criteria for merit reviews:

- (1) Significance/Possibilities of Securing Productive Results: Does this study address an important problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts or methods that drive this field?
- (2) Approach/Soundness of Design: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
- (3) Innovation: Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or methods? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?
- (4) Minimization of Duplication with Other Projects: Is there any coordination required with other NOAA Line Offices or other Federal Agencies?
- (5) Organization and Management of the Project: Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the organization/principal investigator and other researchers (if any)?
- (6) Environment: Does the environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed experiments take advantage of unique features of the scientific environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements?
- (7) Methods Proposed for Monitoring and Evaluating the Success of Failure of the Project: What are they? Are they appropriate?
- (8) Project Costs: Are they reasonable and commensurate with the statement of work?

### **? Institutional Awards/Programs**

In accordance with the DOC Manual issued in February 2002, an institutional award is a grant or cooperative agreement under which funds should be initially awarded based on competition with the intent to maintain a long-term partnership between DOC/NOAA and the recipient.

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Institutional programs established prior to the issuance of the DOC Manual shall be designated in writing by the Grants Officer and maintained by the Grants Policy Advisor.

Designation as an institutional award allows for subsequent awards within the scope of the originally approved activity to be made on a non-competitive basis as long as the recipient continues to perform satisfactorily and submits the appropriate application document(s) as needed for subsequent awards. The results of the periodic reviews, as required by the DOC Manual in Chapter 16, Section K.2, must validate the effectiveness and continued desirability of the use of institutional award(s) for the designated program. Individual institutional awards should not exceed a five (5) year period.

### **Institutional Award Documentation Requirements:**

- ✓ For newly created institutional awards that are recommended for funding under a competitive announcement, the documentation provided to the Grants Office should be consistent with a competitive award.
- ✓ For issuance of a new five-year institutional award that is a continuation of a program that has previously been designated by the Grants Officer as institutional, the FPO shall prepare a recommendation memo summarizing the basis of the original institutional award designation.
  - If initially selected through a competitive announcement in accordance with the DOC Manual, then the memo must include a brief summary of the original competitive selection and the citation for the Federal Register notice (FR volume, number, date, and page number of the notice); or
  - If the original basis for the institutional designation was established prior to issuance of the DOC Manual, the FPO must summarize the original basis for the institutional relationship and refer to the official designation by the Grants Officer.
  - Regardless of the basis for original designation, the FPO must also indicate in the recommendation memo the date of the latest periodic review and a brief summary of the results of the review and the consideration of the results in continuing the institutional program.
- ✓ For those institutional programs that allocate funds to multiple institutions (i.e., Sea Grant, NURP, and IFLOWS), the FPO must prepare an allocation memo that provides an explanation of decision process utilized to allocate funds to the designated institutional partners and a breakdown of the fund distribution.

### **Non-Discretionary Funding** (see Chapter 6 of DOC Manual for definition)

#### **? Formula/Allotment**

These awards are made to organizations for which eligibility has been limited by law to a particular class of applicants, of which each applicant has been notified of the availability of funding and every applicant that applies and that meets the statutory requirements is assured an award. Depending on the program and its legislation, there may be competition among the eligible applicants for additional funding as an incentive for receiving proposals for innovative or pilot/demonstration projects.

Typically there is a formula or allotment established that identifies each applicant and the amount of funding. Formula/allotment based programs include the Coastal Zone Management Program, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and the National Marine Fisheries Section 404 programs such as: Cooperative Fisheries Statistics, Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, etc.

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All of these programs require the following to be submitted with each application package:

- ✓ A memo that explains the basis for the allocation to all eligible applicants,
- ✓ An allocation plan with the distribution of funds (may be included in memo if appropriate), and
- ✓ One technical/merit review of the proposed application in accordance with the DOC Manual. (see separate section on Merit Reviews above)

### **? Congressionally Mandated (hard earmark – required by statute or law)**

Congressionally mandated awards (hard earmarks) are not discretionary as they are mandated by law. These awards are made to organizations which are specifically named (not generally described) in a statute and for which funds are identified in an appropriations act. The recipient is entitled to the award and has an enforceable right to receive financial assistance. Therefore, all funds earmarked in the appropriation act must go to the recipient identified. This category does not include projects that are contained in the legislative history which are referred to as "Soft Earmarks" and addressed above under Congressionally Directed Awards. Because statutorily earmarked applications (hard earmarks) are considered non-discretionary, they are only required to undergo one merit/technical review by a subject matter expert other than the FPO. A cover memo by the FPO referencing the statutory mandate along with a copy of the merit/technical review should be provided with the application package. Should negative issues arise during the merit/technical review process, it will be the responsibility of the program office to resolve all issues to the satisfaction of the NOAA Grants Officer. If a recipient is unwilling to modify their application based on sound comments from the reviewers, the FPO must fully document what action was taken to solicit changes from the applicant and their response.

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## **4. PERFORMANCE/PROGRESS REPORT**

### **FREQUENCY:**

The administrative rules (15 CFR 14.51 for educational institutions and non-profits and 15 CFR 24.40 for States and local government) require that the recipients/grantees shall submit performance reports at least annually and no more frequently than quarterly.

The NOAA standard for performance reports (also referred to as "progress" reports) is semi-annually, i.e., every six (6) months from the start date issued on the award, with the reports being due 30 days after the reporting period. If the FPO selects semi-annual reports, then no further action is needed because this requirement is included in the NOAA Administrative Standard Award Condition.

If the FPO determines that annual reports are sufficient to meet the needs of the FPO's review and monitoring of the recipient's progress, then the FPO must prepare a Programmatic Special Award Condition that meets requirements of applicable administrative rules for the type of recipient. The FPO should consult with the Grants Team Leader for his/her program for additional guidance in preparing an annual report award condition.

NOTE: Any prescribed format by the Program Office for the performance reports must be cleared by OMB and the applicable clearance/expiration information must be included in the Programmatic Special Award Conditions.

### **FINAL PERFORMANCE/PROGRESS REPORT:**

Final performance reports, regardless of the frequency of the interim reports, are due 90 days after expiration or termination of the award. If the last report that covers the remainder of the

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award period is sufficient for programmatic purposes to serve as the final report, then the Grants Office will add an administrative special award condition to that effect. Otherwise, no further action is needed.

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### **5. FUNDING INFORMATION**

The Federal share is the amount of funding currently available and certified by an authorized budget official on the CD-435.

NOTE: The CD-435 should include award number and typed names in all signature blocks. The CD-435 must be signed by an authorized budget official that has been designated by the Line/Program Office (LO). Individuals "acting for" cannot sign in the absence of the authorized budget official unless he/she is also designated as being authorized by the LO.

If the Federal share is \$300,000 or greater, then the completed Checklist must be emailed to the NOAA Deputy Director of Public Affairs Office at: [Scott.Smullen@noaa.gov](mailto:Scott.Smullen@noaa.gov). The Public Affairs Office has requested this information upon submission of an application package to the Grants Office in order to prepare a press release. This is a separate requirement from the OLIA congressional notification that is handled by the Grants Office at time of award.

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### **6. MULTI-YEAR AWARD**

A "multi-year" award has an award period of more than 12 months of activity, is partially funded when the award is approved, and is subsequently funded in annual increments.

Multi-year applications should be prepared as follows:

- ✓ SF-424 (application) should list the complete Project Period (Block 13) and the Total Estimated Funding (Block 15) for the entire multi-year period;
- ✓ SF-424A (budget) should list both Federal and Non-Federal share (if applicable) for each year of the project period (use additional budget sheets if necessary); and
- ✓ A full program description for each year of proposed activity.

The key requirement for issuing a multi-year award is that the multi-year project must be separated into annual tasks with defined work products that can be completed at each year's end, thus allowing DOC/NOAA to provide funding in annual increments. Multi-year awards should not be considered for programs or long-term awards where the funding allocation may substantially change (either increase or decrease) from initial projections. Multi-year awards can be issued for up to a five (5) year period.

In accordance with the DOC Manual, multi-year awards should not be used for projects that are exclusively for construction, alterations/renovations, or acquisition of property. Multi-year award designation also does not refer to any award that has an award period of more than 1 year which is fully funded at the onset of the award period.

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### **7. MATCH REQUIREMENTS**

Many programs do not require matching non-federal funds; however, if a statutory authority is used for the award that requires a match, justification must be provided to explain why no



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match has been included on the application. Match required by statute must be provided unless there is a statutory exception that applies.

Voluntary match or cost-share is if the applicant has chosen to include a non-federal share on the application (SF-424) that is not required by statute or program announcement or exceeds the amount required. If voluntary cost-share is listed on the application, then it will be incorporated as a match requirement for the award. It is recommended that applicants not include voluntary match or cost-share on the application and budget forms. If other support and applicant contributions are of interest to the FPO but not used as an evaluation or selection factor, then the voluntary cost-share should only be discussed within the proposal itself.

It is necessary for the FPO to clearly identify any matching costs that are required from the applicant. With respect to any matching funds to be incorporated into the award, the Grants Office calculates match as a percentage of TOTAL costs. Because the match requirement is often stated in various ways depending on the program, examples are provided below on how to indicate the percentage of match as a percentage of total costs. In addition, the FPO needs to clearly identify if all of the federal funds being awarded require a match or if portions of the Federal funds have different or no match requirement.

Example: Program authority indicates that the grantee must provide 30% match of total costs (this means that 70% of the total costs will be federal).

If total project costs are known to be \$100K, then 30% or \$30K would be the match and \$70K would be the federal share.

If only total federal share is known to be \$100K, then the total project costs can be calculated by dividing \$100K by 0.70 (which is the 70% federal share) which will equal total project costs of \$142,858 (figure is rounded up). Thus, the match amount = \$42,858 or \$142,858 - \$100K (federal share).

Issue regarding rounding: Any match that is required is expressed as a percentage of the minimum contribution that the applicant must provide. Because awards are made in whole dollars, all rounding of cents should be added to the applicant share. Thus in the example above, the total project costs based on dividing \$100K by 0.70 would be \$142,857.14. Because the non-federal share required is being backed into based on the amount of federal funds available, the 14¢ should be rounded up in order to be added to the applicant share. Therefore, the total project cost must be listed as \$142,858 because the federal share cannot exceed \$100,000 and an award cannot be issued with total project costs of \$142,857.14.

Example: Program authority indicates that match is a ratio of 1:1 federal-to-grantee contributions. This represents a match requirement of 50% of total costs.

Calculate ratio as a percentage of total costs by dividing 1 by the sum of the ratio, which in the above example is:  $1 \div (1+1)$  or  $\frac{1}{2} = 50\%$ .

Other ratio calculations:  $1.5:1 = 40\%$  or  $1/(1.5+1) = 1/(2.5)$   
 $4:1 = 20\%$  or  $1/(4+1) = 1/5$

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Example: Program authority indicates that a cost share equal to 50% of the federal share. This results in a match requirement of 1/3 or 33.333% of total costs.

Calculate fraction of 1/3 based on the fact for every \$2 of federal share, a match of \$1 is required, which is a ratio of 2:1 federal-to-non-federal share. Thus  $1/(1+2) = 1/3$  or 33.333%.

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### **8. APPLICANT SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

#### **DUNS Number**

Effective October 1, 2003, OMB now requires that all applicants for financial assistance must provide a Data Universal Numbering System number when applying for a grant or cooperative agreement. If the recipient did not list their DUNS number on the SF-424 in the Applicant Identifier box in the upper right-hand corner of the old standard forms, then the FPO must obtain documentation of the number from the applicant (e.g., an email) to submit to the Grants Office with the application package. For more specific information on this requirement, see the Grants Office website link regarding the DUNS number:

<http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Egrants/DUNS.pdf>

#### **Conflict of Interest/Post Employment Restrictions**

If a former DOC employee working for the applicant has represented or will represent the applicant before DOC or another Federal agency regarding this application and/or subsequent award or has been involved in the merit review and/or selection process, then the FPO must identify the person(s), list their period of DOC employment, and describe their involvement in this project and/or NOAA grant program and consult with the DOC General Counsel Ethics Office for a determination of conflict. A determination by the Ethics Office must be submitted to the Grants Office with the application package.

#### **Name Check**

In accordance with the DOC Manual, it is the FPO responsibility to have key individuals of non-exempt organizations complete and sign the DOC form CD-346 (Applicant for Funding Assistance) and to include the completed form with the application package submitted to the Grants Office for funding. Officials of state and local governments and accredited colleges and universities are exempt from the name check review process. Identification of "key individuals" is based on the applicant's organizational structure as outlined in Chapter 21, Section D, of the DOC Manual.

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### **9. MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS**

The Department of Commerce/NOAA has made a commitment to expand and strengthen its partnerships with Minority Serving Institutions to serve as a means to meet its principal goals of environmental stewardship, assessment, and prediction.

See the MSI list provided by the US Department of Education at:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html>

If the award is being made to an MSI recipient or if a subaward is being made to an MSI subrecipient, then indicate the federal share of award/subaward, a brief statement of work, and

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the FPO name and telephone as indicated on the Checklist and email the completed form to [Arlene.S.Porter@noaa.gov](mailto:Arlene.S.Porter@noaa.gov) in addition to the submission of the package to the Grants Office.

For further information regarding the MSI grant initiatives or if selection of an MSI subrecipient is determined post award, contact [Arlene.S.Porter@noaa.gov](mailto:Arlene.S.Porter@noaa.gov).

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### 10. WAIVER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND COST-RELATED PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

#### **Expanded Authorities under 15 CFR Part 14.25**

Recipients covered under 15 CFR Part 14 (i.e., educational institutions and non-profit organizations) may be entitled to expanded authorities to initiate changes without prior approval by the Grants Officer. Under non-construction awards that support research, the following prior approvals are automatically waived by the regulations (see 15 CFR Part 14.25(e) for restrictions):

- ✓ Incur pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to the start of the award;
- ✓ Extend the award period once up to 12 months; and
- ✓ Carry forward unobligated balances to the next budget period.

Therefore, the above three administrative actions do NOT require Grants Officer or Program Officer approval. Note: The FPO does NOT have authority to approve any administrative or cost-related requests from the recipient – all requests must be submitted to the Grants Officer for action.

The regulations indicate that the Grants Officer may waive one or more of the following administrative and cost-related changes that require prior approval by the Grants Officer:

- ✓ Change in a key person specified in the application;
- ✓ Absence for more than 3 months or a 25% reduction in time devoted to the project by the approved project director or principal investigator;
- ✓ Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with the applicable cost principals (Note: this only applies to additional cost items within established budget line item costs, e.g., foreign travel when only domestic travel has been approved on the line item budget);
- ✓ Transfer of funds allotted for training allowances to other categories of expenses;
- ✓ Subaward, transfer or contracting out of any work under the award if not described in the approved application

In order for any of the above prior approval requirements to be waived by the Grants Officer, a special award condition must be added to the award. The FPO must determine if any of these prior approvals should be required and therefore not waived by the Grants Officer. Please note that any action requiring prior approval must be submitted by the FPO to the Grants Officer for review and approval. (NOTE: The FPO does not have the authority to approve any of the above actions and may not impose any additional requirements for approval unless specifically required as part of the terms and conditions of the award.)

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### 11. PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

If **PROGRAM INCOME** is anticipated being earned during performance of this project, then the FPO must clearly flag the application/proposal where it explains in the proposal how this income will be used to promote program objectives or obtain additional documentation from the applicant addressing program income. Program Income can be treated in three different ways (refer to the

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appropriate administrative rules), however, the NOAA Standard is for the recipient to add it to the award to further approved program activities.

If a **VIDEO** will be created for public viewing as part of this project that is not a training video or raw footage, then the FPO must obtain clearance from the appropriate Line Office Public Affairs Contact and submit a copy of the clearance to the Grants Office with the application package.

If a **SURVEY/QUESTIONNAIRE** is required by the Federal Program Officer for this project, then the FPO must provide a copy of clearance obtained from OMB or DOC waiver and submit a copy of the clearance to the Grants Office with the application package.

If **DOC/NOAA-owned equipment** will be provided to recipient for use under this award, then it must be described in a Programmatic Special Award Condition that clearly identifies the federally-owned equipment being furnished for this award and its intended use/purpose.

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### **12. TRANSFERRED FUNDS**

If this award includes any Federal funds transferred from another Federal agency specifically for this award, the FPO must provide a copy of the transfer documentation from the other Federal agency (e.g., MIPR or Interagency Agreement) which should include:

- ✓ Transferring agency's statutory authority for grant-making (Note: the Economy Act cannot be the sole basis for the transfer, i.e., both agencies must have similar grant making authorities);
- ✓ Scope of activity to be covered by the transferred funds;
- ✓ Fiscal year bounds of funds (i.e., no-year funds vs. fixed year funds); and
- ✓ Any other requirements from the transferring agency.

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### **13. NEPA REQUIREMENTS**

The FPO is responsible for ensuring, in conjunction with the Responsible Program Manager of the NEPA review, that a proper environmental review is conducted for each proposed project in accordance with NOAA Administrative Order 216-6. The Strategic Planning Office, within Program Planning and Integration, should be consulted for further assistance. (See the NOAA website for NEPA Coordination at: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov>.)

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### **14. PROGRAMMATIC SPECIAL AWARD CONDITIONS**

If the award will be a cooperative agreement (thus requiring a statement of substantial involvement); if the FPO requires annual progress reports or must have performance reports submitted in a specific format (as approved by OMB); or if there are any additional programmatic requirements including issues with NEPA; then the FPO must prepare as a separate sheet the Programmatic Special Award Conditions (SACs) to be incorporated directly into the award. The following format must be used:

Using plain 8½ x 11-inch paper with margins no greater than 1-inch but not less than ¾ of an inch, type "Attachment B" and the NOAA award number in the upper right-hand corner of the sheet, indicate the heading of the attachment as "NOAA Programmatic Special Award Conditions," and enumerate the conditions with substantial involvement listed first, if applicable. All conditions should be in plain language. Below is an example format – only list Programmatic

## **NOAA Federal Program Officer (FPO) Checklist Instructions for New Awards**

SACs that are applicable to the particular award being submitted to the Grants Office for funding (consult with Grants Team Leader as needed):

(EXAMPLE – separate plain sheet of 8½ x 11-inch paper)

### **ATTACHMENT B**

**NOAA Award No. NA03XXX4990010**

### **NOAA PROGRAMMATIC SPECIAL AWARD CONDITIONS**

1. The substantial involvement by the Federal government is as follows:

(Insert concise paragraph, in plain language, describing the actual involvement by NOAA. See Chapter 5 of the DOC Manual for examples of what constitutes substantial involvement.)

2. Annual performance reports . . . .
3. Other programmatic conditions . . . .

NOTE: The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) requires the Program Office to obtain approval from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) before conducting or sponsoring a collection of information. Therefore, specific report formats or additional information or documentation requirements beyond those authorized by the standard (SF) forms or include in the proposal require the OMB Approval Number and Expiration Date to be included with the Programmatic Special Award Conditions and should be listed below the NOAA Award Number. Expired OMB approvals cannot be incorporated into the award and must be re-approved and/or extended by OMB prior to submission to the Grants Office.

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### **15. CONTACT INFORMATION**

#### **APPLICANT**

Because the FPO works directly with the applicant in preparing and submitting complete and accurate application documents, it is requested that the FPO provide an Administrative or Budget contact person that has provided actual assistance in preparing the application forms, especially if it is someone other than the contact person provided on the SF-424.

For awards involving research and/or educational institutions, provide the name and contact information of the Principal Investigator. Otherwise, this section can be left blank.

#### **PROGRAM OFFICE**

Complete contact information of the FPO who certifies the application for funding in accordance with section 18 below. The FPO will also be indicated on the transmittal letter of the award document sent to the award recipient.

Alternate Program Office Contact information is requested as a back up and/or additional contact for the Grants Office to use in order to have any programmatic issues addressed in a timely manner and/or in the absence of the FPO.

## **NOAA Federal Program Officer (FPO) Checklist Instructions for New Awards**

### **16. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Space provided to address other issues or provide special instructions – this precludes need of a transmittal/cover memo. This does not supercede requirement of a separate memo addressing the selection of this application in accordance with section 3 above.

### **17. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUNDING**

The FPO is the NOAA program person responsible for certifying that the application package submitted to the Grants Office has been reviewed and is being recommended for funding in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, OMB circulars, and the DOC Grants and Cooperative Agreements Interim Manual. The FPO must also confirm that all documentation, additional reviews, and/or action required by the Checklist and/or Instructions have been addressed and provided as appropriate with the application package. In addition, the FPO must determine that the budgeted costs prepared by the applicant are realistic to accomplish the work proposed. Therefore, the FPO must sign and date the Checklist for it to be accepted by the Grants Office as a required part of the application package to be awarded.

### **18. ORDER OF DOCUMENTATION TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE GRANTS OFFICE**

This is not only a list of all the documentation that is required for a complete Application Package but also the required order in which the documentation should be submitted to the Grants Office.

**Note: If any required documentation is not provided to the Grants Office at the time of submission of the application package, then the Grants Office may return the package in its entirety to the FPO until complete.**